

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 20 JULY 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 22:1

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: 47:1, 4

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 25:9

Scripture reading: Isaiah 53

Scripture text: Isaiah 53:9; Catechism Sunday 16

Scripture text: Isaiah 53:9; Catechism Lord's Day 16

And they made His grave with the wicked-But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

(Isaiah 53:9)

Here we find grief and joy simultaneously, because it speaks of the worst part of Christ's suffering on earth but also of the breaking through of his glory.

- The utter depth of his suffering was his death on the cross together with two gang leaders, while He was completely innocent.
- The breaking through of his glory is revealed by Isaiah's words: **and with a rich man in his death.**

In the spirit Isaiah was standing in front of the cross.

- He saw how the Lord Jesus' was afflicted – the way He was abused, and also when his eyes glazed and He died between the two robbers.

- But Isaiah also walked to the garden of Joseph from the town of Arimathea. Here Jesus' glory began to break through. He was buried in a new tomb.
- *The old was replaced. From then onwards Jesus would make all things new!*

We divide this sermon under two headings:

1. Sentenced but innocent – therefore buried in wealth!

2. That burial tells of our own future!

1. Sentenced but innocent – therefore buried in wealth!

Let's first look at Christ's death as planned by his enemies. Isaiah says in verse 8 that He was cut off out of the land of the living

- He lived among people, but they didn't want any contact with Him.
- They didn't want to learn anything from Him – nothing that was important for their salvation.
- And eventually they also rejected Him. They demanded his death sentence in spite of his innocence.
- Together with criminals those for whose salvation He came to earth crucified Him.
- His beneficiaries became his enemies who hatefully nailed Him to the cross in the middle – between the two murderers – as if He was guiltier than they were.

Everybody thought He was also going to be buried together with these criminals.

- The Roman custom was that people who were crucified were left on the cross until all of them had died.
- Then they dug one hole in which all the criminals were buried.
- That was part of the curse of the death and burial of a person who deserved the death on the cross.

But it was different in the case of Jesus. The Jews were too scared to bury Him like the criminals, because according to the Jewish law their deceased **had to have a proper burial**.

- Although they had condemned Him, He was a Jew after all!
- So Jesus was saved the scorn of being cast into a grave with criminals.
- The Jewish law provided for Jesus' proper burial.
- This was possible, because Jesus Christ completely emptied his cup of sorrows when He died on the cross.

Because the Romans passed sentence, Jesus' body belonged to them. Therefore the people who wanted to bury Him had to go and ask for his body.

For us the family is responsible for the burial of a family member. The dead belongs to his family and they bury him.

- But the Bible says that Jesus' grave was with the wicked. This refers to the fact that the Romans wanted to bury Him together with the two criminals (and then also the fact that in terms of the law his body belonged to them).
- So intense was the hatred of Satan and his people against the Anointed of God!

But God puts limits to evil. Therefore He foils the rest of the devil's work.

- This is why Isaiah could write about Jesus who would be with a rich man in his death!
- After the crucifixion God did not plan any more grief for his Son. Suddenly the scorn was over.

A man held in great respect among the people in Jerusalem – Joseph from Arimathea – approached Pilate.

- He was a member of the Jewish high council and went to ask for the body of the Son of God. So it happened that Jesus' body was with the rich man.
- This rich man had a new tomb available.

Jesus' sermons now bore fruit. The rich man was overcome by fear, because the death of Jesus changed his heart.

- This man (Joseph) expected the kingdom of God and he realized that he needn't be ashamed of the crucified Jesus, because He preached about the resurrection from the dead.

The early Christians cared for each other and here Joseph from Arimathea already shows this caring love.

- They removed the body of Jesus from the cross.
 - A fine shroud (winding-sheet) lies ready
 - Myrrh is available to embalm the body.
 - A personal tomb is given up for Him.
 - A cloth is wrapped around Jesus' head that had been cut by the crown of sharp thorns.
 - The wealthiest man in Jerusalem couldn't have given more for the burial of his own son.

This event symbolises the fact that the old had passed and that everything became new – same as the burial and the tomb of the Son of God.

- Jesus Christ was buried in an honourable way to ensure us that He really died.
- Jesus Christ was worthy of all these marks of honour. Consider that Isaiah said that He had done nothing wrong and there was no deceit in his mouth.

The crucifixion was still part of Jesus Christ's suffering, but not his burial.

- It was proof of his innocence, and here his glory began to break through.
- Isaiah's prophecy already stated that Jesus was not the instigator as Satan and his followers gave Him out to be.
- They tried to make people believe that He was a man of deceit and injustice – quite the opposite of what or Scripture text says.

But God preaches the truth.

- His Son is buried like the rich people – the burial of a righteous person!
- His burial clearly proclaimed to the entire world that He was innocent.

2. That burial tells of our own future!

This burial also contained the work of Christ.

- He is the only Righteous who died for the unrighteous. Isaiah puts it very clearly::
 - He was wounded for our transgressions, and He was bruised for our iniquities.

The burial of Jesus Christ was also to satisfy the need of his people.

- The faithful really needed to know that Christ was definitely dead.
- We have to know that He really died – that his suffering was really so intense because of our sins!

In the garden of Joseph from Arimathea everything was alive – all but the body of Jesus in the new tomb.

- But the first assault on death also took place in this same garden.
- In this garden the Son of God left this tomb, because He rose from the dead and returned to life.
- On the morning of the third day, when the women came to the tomb with the burial spices they had prepared, the tomb looked completely different. The linen wrappings were lying there and the cloth that had covered his head was folded up. The body was gone!
- Jesus Christ conquered death. He did it with such ease that He even had time to tidy the tomb before He left it.
- He left his shroud behind because He left the grave in glory.

It should be the same for us.

- We should live to die in Jesus Christ.
- We shall also leave our worldly clothing in the grave and rise from it glorified.
- This is Jesus Christ's promise to us through his burial and resurrection.

The burial of Jesus Christ tells us that our sins caused Him to die and be buried! But it also preaches life to us!

- Jesus Christ rose from the dead – and we shall also rise from the dead!
- He will wake us up and return us to life in the same way that He rose from the dead.

Jesus Christ's burial tells us that He was not destroyed when He had to die for our sins.

- His tomb is empty, because death was not powerful enough to keep Him.
- He conquered sin and death for us.
- His empty tomb therefore preaches life to us. We shall also rise from the dead to be with Him eternally.
- Jesus' tomb does not speak of death. It speaks of a new life!

This sermon is summarised in Catechism Lord's Day 16:

40. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death?

A. Because of the justice and truth of God[1] satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.[2]

[1] Gen. 2:17. [2] Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9, 14, 15.

41. Q. Why was he buried?

A. His burial testified that He had really died.[1]

[1] Is. 53:9; John 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; I Cor. 15:3,4.

42. Q. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

A. Our death is not a payment for our sins, but it puts an end to sin and is an entrance into eternal life.[1]

[1] John 5:24; Phil. 1:21-23; I Thess. 5:9, 10.

43. Q. What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

A. Through Christ's death our old nature is crucified, put to death, and buried with Him,[1] so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer reign in us,[2] but that we may offer ourselves to Him as a sacrifice of thankfulness.[3]

[1] Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:11, 12. [2] Rom. 6:12-14. [3] Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1, 2.

44. Q. Why is there added: He descended into hell?

A. In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony, which He endured throughout all His sufferings[1] but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.[2]

[1] Ps. 18:5, 6; 116:3; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45, 46; Heb. 5:7-10. [2] Is. 53.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 49:6

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

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